

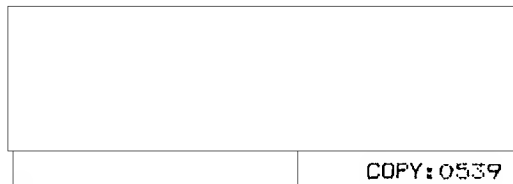
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~~Top Secret~~**BALKAN CRISIS: Situation Report**

The UN's suspension of relief flights to Sarajevo yesterday will add to pressure to open new relief routes. Federal and Serb republic elections appear likely to be held in December, while Bosnian President Izetbegovic is under growing political pressure.

Relief Deliveries Suspended in Bosnia and Herzegovina

UN officials, concerned that fighting between Bosnian Croat and Muslim forces near Travnik could endanger relief aircraft, suspended aid flights into Sarajevo yesterday. UN convoys also remain stalled north of Mostar where fighting has spread from Travnik to Vitez, blocking the primary route to Sarajevo.

Comment:

The latest flareup may also have been prompted by Muslim dissatisfaction over Izetbegovic's recent effort to appoint a Croat as defense minister. The UN probably will be forced to try to negotiate a series of local truces among Croat, Muslim, and Serb units along the relief corridors in order to resume humanitarian deliveries.

Pressure for New Relief Routes to Bosnia and Herzegovina Grows

The UN's suspension of the Sarajevo airlift yesterday and the earlier halt to convoys from the Adriatic coast, which adversely affect more than 500,000 people in central Bosnia and Herzegovina, underscore the need for alternative convoy routes. Only 55 percent of the minimum aid needed arrived each day during the first half of October, and suspensions of these deliveries temporarily leave the Belgrade-to-Sarajevo route as the only active corridor for shipments. Deliveries from Belgrade are as yet insufficient—they average only 8 metric tons per day—and describe the situation as desperate, especially with winter approaching.

Comment: There is some promise for future increases in aid deliveries by land from Belgrade. Daily deliveries of 300 metric tons are possible along the paved all-weather route. Although fighting is less intense along this corridor than in other areas, the local warlords in eastern Bosnia or the fighting around Sarajevo could threaten convoys using it.

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Serbia and Montenegrin Elections Likely

Federal prime minister Panic announced yesterday that federal and republic elections in Serbia would take place on 13 December. [redacted]
[redacted] Belgrade may dissolve the Federal Assembly today, although this may be delayed by reports that federal president Cosic has been hospitalized. Discussions between the ruling Socialists and the democratic opposition on election modalities are close to an agreement on proportional, rather than majority, voting.

[redacted] The timing flies in the face of this month's referendum rejecting an early election, and Milosevic's candidacy also would contradict recent reports that he has not yet made up his mind. The Montenegrin Assembly has already voted to have its republic elections in December. [redacted]

Comment: Panic reportedly plans to run as an opposition candidate and may find that, by pushing for early elections, he has set the stage for his own removal. Proportional voting, the prospect that the democrats will unite under one ticket, and possible participation by Kosovo's ethnic Albanians, however, should enable the opposition to win a substantial number of Assembly seats. Milosevic in all likelihood would win if he ran for reelection as republic president, which he probably will do. His grip on power could be loosened, however, if the democratic opposition unites under one banner and if the elections are reasonably fair. [redacted]

Bosnian President Izetbegovic's Rocky Road

Political turmoil appears to be growing as embattled Izetbegovic approaches the end of his mandate in December to head the collective Bosnian Presidency. Yesterday he repeated denials that he has been ousted by Muslim hardliners. [redacted]

[redacted] Radical Muslims have also called for suspending the Presidency and for the formation of an emergency committee. Meanwhile, Izetbegovic has agreed in principle to a plan by international mediators to reorganize Bosnia into approximately 10 administrative units based on geographic criteria. [redacted]

Comment: Izetbegovic must try to placate the Croats, whose presence in the government is crucial to its claims that it represents the entire population of Bosnia. Moreover, Bosnian Croats and the regular Croatian Army have provided the bulk of the arms and the most effective troops for fighting the Serbs. Izetbegovic's increasingly accommodative stance, however, is not enough to satisfy key Bosnian Croat leaders, yet will undermine his support among Muslims. The process for choosing a successor to Izetbegovic is unclear; he probably still has enough influence on the panel to gain the election of a nonseparatist Croat or another moderate Muslim. [redacted]

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